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SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY

Note verbale dated 26 September 1996 from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to transmit both the remarks of President Kim Young Sam of the Republic of Korea at the Presentation of the First Franklin Delano Roosevelt International Disability Award held at San Francisco on 15 September 1996 and the message from Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

The Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea would like to request that the present note and its annexes be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda item 100.

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ANNEX I

Remarks of the President of the Republic of Korea at the presentation of the first Franklin Delano Roosevelt International Disability Award, held at San Francisco on 15 September 1996

On behalf of the Korean people, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute and the World Committee on Disability for selecting the Republic of Korea as the first recipient of the distinguished Franklin Delano Roosevelt International Disability Award.

Considering the special relationship between the Republic of Korea and the United Nations, it is highly significant, I believe, for the Republic of Korea to receive this award here in San Francisco, the birth place of the world Organization. I am deeply gratified by this.

We are all the more honoured because the award symbolizes the indomitable faith and courage of President Franklin Roosevelt, a world leader who greatly contributed to the peace and prosperity of humankind, overcoming his own disability. With his penetrating insight and leadership, he not only forged the United States into a great nation, he also produced a blueprint for a peaceful post-war world order through the establishment of the United Nations.

The greatness of President Roosevelt, who overcame the trials brought on by his physical disability and attained historical achievements, gives much hope and courage to the disabled not only in Korea but throughout the world.

I have a profound respect for the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute because of its efforts to extol the high ideals and achievements of President Roosevelt and to realize the principles and ideas of the United Nations.

There are more than 1 million disabled persons in the Republic of Korea. The Government of the Republic of Korea is doing its utmost to promote their welfare and to help expand their participation in public activities. The Government has provided legal and institutional mechanisms to protect and rehabilitate the disabled, while building more convenient public facilities for them on a large scale. Furthermore, we are actively pushing measures to expand educational and occupational opportunities for the disabled and to help stabilize their livelihoods.

I believe that genuine democracy can be realized only when all people, including the disabled, are able to live with dignity and have the right to pursue happiness equally.

Government policies alone, however, are not enough to ensure that the disabled can live normal lives. It is important for all people to help the disabled and live with them with a spirit of love and dedication. In this respect, I think it is very significant that a "disabled-first" campaign is being carried out on a nationwide scale in our country.

As we receive this distinguished award from the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, today, we feel a sense of grave responsibility. I take this award as a sign of encouragement to the Korean people and Government to make further efforts for the disabled. Moreover, I believe that today's award also places an international responsibility on us to become a model for other developing countries in policies for the disabled, based on the democracy and economic prosperity the Republic of Korea has attained.

On this occasion, I and the entire people of our country must renew our determination to work harder not only for the promotion of the welfare of the disabled but also for the development of democracy and social welfare that were the lofty ideals of President Roosevelt.

I pray that the dedicated efforts of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute and the World Committee on Disability will bear fruit so that the welfare and rights of the disabled will progress greatly worldwide.

ANNEX II

Letter dated 11 September 1996 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Republic of Korea

I congratulate you and the Republic of Korea on receiving the Franklin Delano Roosevelt International Disability Award. This award is designed to advance and encourage the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1982. The Republic of Korea has made great strides towards reaching the goals set out in that Programme.

We salute the memory of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, a great statesman who was a founding father of the United Nations. His life is a witness to the magnificent contributions the disabled have made and can make to a better world. It is altogether appropriate that the Institute that bears his name should have established this award, which is very much in consonance with fundamental goals and values of the United Nations.

I am sure the presentation of this award will encourage Governments, United Nations agencies and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to expand their participation in the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons.

As I said in 1992, although the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons has achieved a global awareness of disability issues, awareness alone will not ensure that disabled people obtain full equality of opportunity. That is why the United Nations is committed to turning awareness into action in the decade ahead.

I am, therefore, very pleased to send warm congratulations on the important progress in this field that has been made by the Government and the people of the Republic of Korea.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI